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The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, *June* 23. 1695.

Queſt. 1. *WHether a Univerſal Accommodation amongſt Proteſtants may ever be expected?*

Anſw. We have formerly told you, *Vol.* 1. *Numb.* 19. That we ſuppoſe (without the Cenſure of paſſing a Raſh undeliberate Judgment, ſubmitting to thoſe who are endued with better Underſtandings) we may Reſolve it in the *Affirmative*, That it may be not only expected, but effected, if Providence ſo pleaſes—We have in the *'foreſaid Mercury*, given our Reaſons for it; ſo that we need add no more upon this *Head*; but only to tell the Reader, That we think our ſelves very happy to *find* our Judgments concur herein with that of our late *Incomparable Queen*; and that we could wiſh, that what the *Learned* SPANHEIMIUS ſays concerning Her Majeſty's Sentiments, as to this Point, (as we find it in his *Elegant Oration upon the Queens Death, publiſht this week in* Engliſh) were Univerſally known: And that it may be ſo as far as lies in our power to make it, we ſhall here recite his words *Verbatim*, as we find 'em in p. 29, and 30. of the *'forementioned Oration* —— His Words are theſe, *viz.* "But "whither will my Subject extend it ſelf; Or how "ſhall thoſe Great Actions which cannot be contra-"cted within any Limits of *Places, Regions, or Ages*, "be confin'd within the bounds of an Oration, or the "Walls of this Temple? Yet were *I* not too nar-"rowly ſtreightned, how many things could *I* ſay of "the Earneſt Deſires of our Pious Queen, to ſee ex-"tinguiſhed, or as much as could be leſſened the *Impi-"ous Diviſions*, too deeply Rooted; but firſt ſown by "the *wicked Emiſſaries* of *Rome*, to the Ruine of her "Countrey. *How averſe was ſhe from the Severity of "former Times!* which decreed the *Diſſenters*, if not "to be extirminated by the Sword, yet to be Routed "out by Excommnnications, and Macerated by Im-"priſonments, Fines and Baniſhment, for the *only "ſake of their differing Diſcipline*; *free from all other "the leaſt Stain or Peſtilence of Hereſie or Falſe Do-"ctrine*? And how earneſtly has ſhe wiſh'd in my "hearing, *continues this Learned Author*, (that ſaving "to the Church of *England* and the Biſhops, their An-"cient Rights) *there might be a moderate way found to "conſolidate the common Safety of* England, *and the U-"niverſal Church, by the Union of all parties*; *all Offen-"ces being removed, all Animoſity being laid aſide, "all Paſſion being moderated, and whatſoever on either "ſide ſavoured too much of Humane Invention, being ut-"terly rejected.*——Thus far SPANHEIMIUS. As to the *Inference* he draws from theſe words of the QUEEN, 'tis above our Sphere to meddle with it. We therefore refer our Reader to the *ORATION* it ſelf; where he'l find SPANHEIMIUS (by Reaſon of his *frequent acceſs* to the Queen, during her *Reſidence in Holland*) has communicated to the World *ſeveral things* relating to her *late Majeſty*, not before made publick.

Queſt. 2. *WHat* Flambeau's *and* Wax-Candles *of Ancient Uſe in the* Ceremonies *of the* Heathens? *And from whence do you believe the* Papiſts *received the Cuſtom of uſing* Lights *in their Churches*?

Anſw. Ferrari tells us, The Heathens uſed Torches and Lights at Noon Day in their Sacrifices; and in the Myſteries of *Ceres*, where they celebrated the Enquiry which this Goddeſs made after her Daughter, the Marriage of *Proſerpina*, and the Return of her Mother, with a great Number of Flambeau's. They placed them alſo before the Statues of their Gods. And *Ammian Marcellinus* relates, That one of the Famous Temples of *Apollo* was burnt by the Negligence of the Philoſopher *Aſclepiades*, who had left Wax Candles burning before a Statue therein. But Flambeau's were chiefly uſed on their Feaſt Days. *Suetonius* gives us an account, That *Cæſar*, after his Triumph, aſcended to the Capitol by Forty Elephants, which carried a great Number of Flambeau's. They placed them at Noon Day before the Gates of their Houſes, where they celebrated any Feaſt, either publick or private.

Infamous places were known by the Candles which were placed at their entring; from whence *Tertullian*, in his Apology, laughing at the publick Mirth and Rejoicings of the Heathens, ſays, *Cur die lato laureis poſtes non adumbramus, nec lucernis diem infringimus? Honeſta res eſt, ſolennitate publico exigente, inducere domui tuæ habitum alicujus novi Lupanaris?* Some have believed, however, that the Chriſtians received this Cuſtom of Lights from the Heathens, which the Papiſts ſtill retain; but others think it to be from the Jews, that they learnt to keep Candles burning in their Churches. *Perſius* ſpeaks of this Cuſtom of the Jews, after this manner,

Herodis venere dies, unctæq; feneſtris
Diſpoſitæ pinguem Nebulam vomuere Lucernæ.

It ſeems this Poet called the Feaſt of the Dedication of the Temple *Herodis dies*, becaule *Herod* having rebuilt it dedicated it a new. However the *Jews* had at that time the Cuſtom of keeping at their doors a great Number of lighted Candles, and if we may believe *Seneca*, they light them alſo on their Sabbath days, who in one of his letters ſpeaks thus: *Accendere aliquem lucernas ſabbatis prohibeamus, quoniam nec lumine Dii egent, & ne homine quidem delectantur fuligine.*

Queſt. 3. *How far did the benefits of our Saviours death Extend? What is the method which God Almighty takes to Convert Man? Was he predeſtinated from all Eternity to Happineſs, or Miſery?*

Anſw. We might, 'tis true, give our opinion upon theſe queries, but as the reſolving of 'em cou'd be of no uſe, and at beſt we cou'd hit of no more but uncertain gueſſes, we think it better omitted, and wiſh perſons wou'd only apply themſelves to the obedience of the Goſpel, and not think of penetrating into the thoughts which God had of Man, before he Created him, or of knowing exactly the manner whereby he touches the heart of thoſe he converts, we may be abſolutely aſſured we ſhall obtain ſalvation, if we obey his Word, whether we know this or not. Beſides, it may be doubted, whether 'tis poſſible to reſolve all the difficulties which too curious Enquiries may produce, and that we do not thereby cauſe Schiſms, in deciding things which are ſo obſcure and liable to diſpute.

Queſt. 4. *I deſire you would give me ſome general mark whereby I may diſtinguiſh between Fundamental Articles, and ſuch as are not ſo; and how far we may look upon perſons as Infidels, or good Chriſtians?*

Anſw. Faith and Sanctification being Two Things which God indiſpenſibly demands on our part, in order to our Eternal Happineſs, whatever is required of us to believe concerning Jeſus Chriſt, is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation; and all Opinions, the belief of which are requiſite to aſſiſt us in the attaining of that Holineſs of Life which the Goſpel commands, are fundamental;

damental: And if these Characters are observed, it will easily be perceived, that those Opinions which are absolutely necessary, are not in very great Number, since without perplexing the mind with many questions, we may assuredly trust in the promises of Jesus Christ, if we observe the declared Commands of God Almighty; Witness the most illiterate persons, who are wholly ignorant of the greatest part of those Opinions which are disputed by the Schools, and are nevertheless very pious; from whence we may conclude, That what is not in the Scripture, is not necessary to salvation, no more than any thing which may be drawn from thence by subtle and far-fetcht consequences: Therefore we may take away from the Number of Fundamental Articles, all Opinions of pure speculation, which have no influence either on our Faith or Good Works. All Opinions, which although they may contribute to piety, which however are not so absolutely necessary, but that without the believing of them we may be truly Religious; In short, such doctrines which altho in themselves strictly united with the observation of our Saviours precepts, appear not so to those who reject them, if without the believing of them, they apply themselves sincerely to the observation of their Duty; The errour of those persons lying concealed in their minds, without action, having no influence on their lives, whilst they have their hearts toucht with the precepts of the Gospel, which they carefully observe, without perceiving the contrariety between their doctrine and manner of life.

Those who reject any Fundamental Article, may be accounted unbelievers, and those true Christians who receive them all, and live conformably to what is commanded by our Saviour, altho they may deceive themselves in many things.

Queft. 4. *Having received by two, or three persons, several stories of a friend, as that she shou'd speak disadvantagiously, and maliciously of me, upon promise of secrecy; which I have lately discovered to be false, and also that they have told back to her as many lies of me, I desire your opinion if I may not honourably break my word to these treacherous persons, to regain her former good opinion, and prevent further mischief?*

Answ. You not only may but ought to discover such baseness, and since your promise was made upon the supposition, that what was told you was a truth, you finding it false are freed from the obligation of it, yet 'twill be very handsome to deal openly, and acquaint those with your intention who told you these stories.

Queft. 5. *I do earnestly beg, you wou'd answer the following query. A Couple of friends of mine, a Man and VVoman; have Contracted a mutual Love to each other, and are near the point of Marriage, the Circumstances are this. He is an Artist, and a person of very good Business, Reputation, and Honesty, and able enough to maintain his mistress, if occasion require, and by his general acquaintance wou'd assist her from his heart; the VVoman is a virtuous understanding person, and newly set up in the VVorld, partly with mony and the rest by her Credit, they love one another very well, but the mother of the VVoman, on whom the Daughter can have no Dependance, will by no means give consent, but puts strange things into the Daughters head; as if she wou'd never thrive without her consent, so the young VVoman is at a stand, betwixt Duty and Love, and very much troubled. Gentlemen, I beg you wou'd not fail to answer this speedily.*

Answ. Tho her being independant on her mother, does in some measure free her from those strong obligations children generally lye under to their parents, to marry only with their consent, she being almost as much at her own dispose as a widdow is; yet she ought to examine if her mother has not more reason to be averse to the match, then her passion will let her perceive at first sight; but if it shou'd be only prejudice, she must do what she can to convince her of it, and at least wait some time to try if she can change her mind.

Advertisements.

☞ There is now in the Press, and will be Published in few days ——MEMOIRES *on the* COURT *of* ENGLAND, written by way of Letters, by the Countess of *Dannoy* (that ingenious Lady who writ the *Voyage into* SPAIN.) Printed for *Samuel Darker*, and will be sold by the Booksellers of *London* and *Westminster*.

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